



Memorandum

To: Members of the Faculty of Science

From: Joe Apaloo, Dean of Science

Date: July 29, 2024

**RE: Responsibilities, Academic Regulations and Guidelines
for the 2024-2025 Academic Year**

As the first-term of the 2024-25 academic year is fast approaching, and as faculty members finalize course syllabi for their students, I wanted to provide some reminders of important academic regulations and guidelines. What follows is a summary of some of these regulations, key dates for grade submissions and sundry other useful bits of information. For further elaboration on any of these items, please consult the current **Collective Agreement** or the online 2024-25 **Academic Calendar**.

1. **COURSE SYLLABI:** On the first day of classes students must be provided with a course syllabus detailing the material to be covered, the due dates of major assignments, and the grading scheme to be used in the course. **Faculty members are strongly encouraged to provide their syllabi through Moodle and refrain from distributing hard copies.** Major assignments' due dates must be adhered to, and for the sake of equity, extensions should be granted only for compelling reasons. It is important that the grading scheme identified for the students at the beginning of the course not be arbitrarily changed. Each year a number of grade reviews/appeals use the fact that the instructor changed the grading scheme as the basis for their appeal.

Faculty members shall provide the Department Chair, Program Coordinator or School Director with electronic course syllabi, including methods of instruction and forms of evaluation, including examination and assignment due dates, no later than one (1) week before the start of courses in the Academic Term in which the course is being offered. First-term classes start on September 4 and second-term classes start on January 6. It is expected that the course Syllabus Template, and if applicable the Supplementary Statements, approved for the Faculty of Science will be used in preparing course syllabi for submission to Chairs/Coordinators/Director. The Chair/Coordinator/Director shall review the course syllabi for adherence to academic regulations and departmental norms prior to the start of classes each term. Copies of the approved course syllabi shall be forwarded to the Dean.

Faculty members are encouraged to add information in their course syllabi regarding copyright and intellectual property of their course materials. StFX has developed the following draft language for inclusion where appropriate.

These course materials are designed for use in Course XXX at StFX University and are the property of the instructor, unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Copying this material for distribution, online posting, or selling of this material to

third parties without permission is subject to Canadian Copyright Law and is strictly prohibited.

Faculty members are also encouraged to add a line in all their course syllabi informing students that they are responsible for understanding and adhering to all academic regulations that are outlined in Chapter 3 of the Academic Calendar.

Reminder: At the May 2023 Senate meeting the following motion was passed: Each course syllabus must contain a clear statement of the acceptable use of artificial intelligence aids for each given assignment, essay, assessment, examination, etc. which is graded for evaluative purposes so that the student is aware of the requirements. If no such statement is offered, then it will be understood that artificial intelligence aids are not permitted. See the website [Syllabus Statements on Integrity and/or Generative AI](#) for suggested statements.

2. **ABSENCE OF FACULTY MEMBER:** You are responsible for holding classes and conducting laboratories at all scheduled times for those courses which you have been assigned. If you are ill or away from the University for a good reason, you must seek permission from the Chair before cancelling classes, with the exception of emergencies. Regardless of the circumstances, the Chair must be informed as soon as possible whenever a class (or lab or tutorial) will be or has been cancelled. Faculty members must email their classes with notification of the cancellation, in advance, wherever possible. Extended absences (more than two days) must be arranged beforehand with the Department Chair and the Dean, and arrangements may need to be made for a temporary substitute.
3. **AVAILABILITY FOR STUDENT CONSULTATION:** Faculty members shall be available in their offices or online for consultation with students for at least two (2) hours per week for each three-hour credit course, to a required maximum of six (6) hours per week. In addition, **[NEW]** Faculty members shall be present on campus no less than three (3) days per week unless approved by the Dean. Office hours should be posted on your course Moodle site and on your office door.
4. **LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:** StFX uses Moodle as its official course Learning Management System (LMS). All faculty members are strongly encouraged to use Moodle to manage course resources including the posting of course syllabi, lecture materials, assignment instructions, and announcements. Moodle has the capacity to manage course assignments.
5. **STATEMENT ON EQUITABLE LEARNING:** Creating an inclusive classroom environment contributes to effective learning, so course instructors may wish to consider including a statement in their syllabi about the importance of making our classrooms respectful and equitable. Including a statement like the one below in your course syllabus signals to your class that you are committed to creating a safe and equitable learning environment for all students.

“Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe, and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity”.

Please feel free to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in the classroom or in the StFX

Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at mfogarty@stfx.ca or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

6. **MIDTERM GRADES:** First-term midterm grades, for all courses at all levels, accounting for at least 20% of a final grade, must be entered in Banner Self-service by **Monday, October 21**. First-term midterm grades for full year courses must be entered in Moodle or communicated to students in a confidential manner at least one week prior to the deadline for dropping courses without academic penalty. Second-term midterm **grades** must be entered in Banner for all courses at all levels by **February 24, 2025**. For courses in which such a graded assessment is not practical, the instructor(s) must obtain an exception from the Dean.

7. **COURSE DROP DATES:** The drop date for first-term, three-credit courses is **Wednesday, October 30, 2024**. The last day to drop full year courses is **January 15, 2025**. The last day to drop second-term, three-credit courses is **March 5, 2025**. A course discontinued but not dropped is treated as a failure and will affect a student's end-of-year average. In such cases, you will be requested to provide a grade-to-date indicating what the student has earned in the course up to that point. Please inform students who are considering dropping your course about drop dates, and the procedure to be followed in dropping a course, **including the necessity to drop the course online through Banner. It is important to impress upon students that permission to drop or change a course after the course change deadline can only be granted by the Dean's office and that informing the professor, or merely ceasing to attend class is not sufficient.**

8. **DUPLICATION OF PRINTED COURSE MATERIAL:** It is strongly recommended that course material be posted on the course Moodle page and students be informed via a Moodle announcement that materials are available for them to download and bring to class as necessary.

For information in regard to copyrights or the StFX Copyright Policies, please visit [StFX Copyright Policy | St. Francis Xavier University](#). Questions can be directed to library@stfx.ca.

9. **STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND ATTENDANCE:** Please report any students who are repeatedly delinquent in assignments or attendance from in-person or online classes or laboratories to Rita Myatt of the Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Academic Affairs at ada@stfx.ca. This is particularly important for first-year students. You should do this even if you think the student has dropped the course, but you have not been notified of it. Faculty members are required to report any student who has, without excuse, missed three or more classes. This may be done by sending an email to Rita Myatt with the student's name, ID, and course number. The Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Academic Affairs will send a note to the student requesting that they meet with the Faculty member. Please continue to report students who continue to miss class. Prompt responses in this area can often help improve a student's performance.

Faculty are reminded that students who show any symptoms associated with flu-like illnesses will be expected to remain at home and may therefore be absent from class. Reasonable accommodations must be made for assignments, quizzes, papers, tests and/or midterm exams that are missed due to illness.

By posting course materials online, via Moodle, faculty members will support student learning by allowing students who miss class because of illness to keep or catch-up. Regardless of the reason for student absence, it is good practice to follow up with students to ensure they are managing the course material and their studies.

10. **HOLIDAYS:** First-term: The University will be closed on **Monday, September 30** in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The University will also be closed on Thanksgiving **Monday, October 14** which is also the start of the First-term Study Break. Classes resume after the break on **Monday, October 21**. Finally, the University will be closed on Remembrance Day, **Monday November 11**.

Second-term: The Second-term Study break will commence on **February 17**. Classes will resume on **February 24**. The University will be closed on Nova Scotia Heritage Day, **February 17** and Good Friday **April 18**.

11. **GRADING SYSTEM:** The list below indicates some important signposts along the grading scale.

- 80 - First Class Honours
- 75 - Honours
- 50 - Pass

12. **EXAMINATIONS:**

- a) No written tests/exams (excluding lab exams) worth 10% or more of a student's final grade should take place during the last seven (7) teaching days prior to the last day of classes of the academic term. **In the first-term this means no tests or exams worth 10% or more can be scheduled after November 26, 2024. For the second-term, the date would be March 26, 2025. Final exams, if employed, ARE NOT scheduled in this period.**
- b) All final examinations must be held during the formal examination period, as scheduled by the Registrar, at the times indicated in the December and April Exam Schedules. The December exam schedule will be posted on September 27, 2024, and the April exam schedule will be posted on January 31, 2025. In no instances may a final examination be held during class time instead of the time block scheduled by the Registrar (9 am, 2 pm, or 7 pm). In particular, examinations **will not** be rescheduled to accommodate student airline travel arrangements.
- c) Faculty who wish to hold an on-line exam for in-person classes are permitted to do so provided students are notified of the exam format on the first day of class and information pertaining to final exam format is clearly stated in the course syllabus. On-line exams for in-person courses must be scheduled by the Registrar's office. The ability to hold an on-line exam in a computer lab will be limited by the number of requests the Registrar's office receives. Faculty who wish to hold an on-line exam for an in-person class will not be permitted to use invigilation software; therefore, attention must be directed to designing an exam that upholds academic integrity in other ways. Faculty are strongly encouraged to utilize the guidance and resources about online exams shared by the StFX Teaching and Learning Centre ([Teaching and Learning Centre | St. Francis Xavier University \(stfx.ca\)](https://www.stfx.ca/teaching-learning-centre))
- d) Take-home examinations may not be distributed before 1:00 pm on the last day of classes for the term and are to be due no sooner than 7 days, and no later than 10 days, after distribution. Take-home exams must not be due after the last day of the examination period. Any changes to the exam format referenced in the course syllabus must be made, and communicated to students, prior to the last day to change courses for the term.

- e) At least 25% of the final grade in six-credit or three-credit 100 or 200-level courses should be based on December, April, or midterm, summative assignments, such as exams, essays, projects, portfolios, or other appropriate forms of summative assessment.
 - f) Students have the right to review their assessments with their professor should they choose.
 - g) **All course material not returned to students must be kept for at least one year after the course end date.**
13. **RESCHEDULED CLASSES, LAB EXAMS, TESTS, OR CLASS PROJECTS**: When a mandatory class test, quiz, lab exam or class project is scheduled outside normal class hours, provision shall always be made to enable students to attend scheduled classes and laboratories in their other courses. This should be kept in mind both for your information and also so that you may bring it to the attention of students who may tell you that they are unable to attend your class because of a requirement for another course.
14. **MISSING A FINAL EXAM**: Students who are unable to write an examination in December or April at the time scheduled by the Registrar's office due to illness or due to a serious, unexpected circumstance **must notify the Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Academic Affairs within 48 hours of the scheduled exam time at ada@stfx.ca**. The student will be assigned a grade of "IN" and will be required to write the exam on an alternate date. The Exam Deferral form will be sent to you by email to be filled in and returned to the Registrar's Office upon completion of the make-up examination.
15. **MEDICAL NOTES**
Students are NOT required to provide medical documentation for missed assessments. Faculty are required to provide reasonable accommodation for students due to medical or extenuating circumstances when warranted. Such requests do not require Deans' approval and are handled by faculty members. This is different from accommodations for missed final exams which are the purview of the Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Academic Affairs.
16. **FINAL GRADES**: **It is essential that grades are reported according to the deadlines specified in the University Calendar**: December grades in full year courses and final grades in first-term courses are due at **9:00 am, December 20, 2024**. For full-year, and second-term courses final grades are due at **9:00 am, April 28, 2025**, for graduating students, and at **9:00 am, May 5, 2025**, for continuing students.
17. **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** – The Academic Integrity Policy may be found on the Registrar's website at: [Academic Integrity | St. Francis Xavier University \(stfx.ca\)](https://www.stfx.ca/academic-integrity) Please draw your students' attention to Appendix 2, Section 2.6 which reads "Possesses and/or uses unauthorized aids or obtains unauthorized assistance, including but not limited to copying, using a translation service, online aids, bot, any unauthorized computer hardware, software, including computer programs, Apps, widgets, or other electronic retrieval systems or face-to-face assistance for any graded assessments (e.g., quizzes, assignments, tests, and examinations)". This means that students do not need to be caught USING a device like a cell phone or smart watch (for example) during a test or exam to be in violation of the policy. **Simply having the unauthorized device on their person during the test or exam is a violation of the policy.**